country and the extent to which it is more than the average production cost of the world;

(c) whether the Steel Authority of India Limited is contemplating to take steps to bring down this production cost;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the extent to which the production cost is likely to be decreased ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) The cost of production of steel primarilly depends upon prices of inputs such as iron ore, coal, steel scrap and energy, costs of freight and labour and financial charges. As per BICP Tour report on cost study of steel industry. the average cost pattern for production of saleable steel in different countries, based on 1994 data, are as below:

Countries	Cost (US $ per tonne)
USA	503
UK	423
France	504
Germany	530
India (SAIL)	410

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) Steps taken by SAIL to reduce production costs and to improve performance are :

- Modernisation and technological upgradation of its plants.
- Improved quality, product-mix and production in line with market requirements.
- Improving techno-economic factors viz., reduction in coke rate, energy consumption, metallic input, improvement in yield etc.
- Improving availability of equipment through effective maintenance.
- Strict control and reduction in cost of production.

SAIL has planned to reduce the controllable production cost of saleable steel by about 7-8% during 1997-98.

[English]

Cellular Service by Reliance Telecom

395. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to build a global system for mobile communication network to serve its seven circles;

(b) whether the Reliance Telecom has become one of the largest cellular services in India;

(c) if so, the name of the States where it is likely to be provided; and

(d) to what extent the Reliance Telecom have established services in the country ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The company holds licences for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service for seven Telecom. Circles which is the maximum number of licences held by a single company. A total of 33 licences for Telecom Circles and 8 licences for 4 metro cities have been awarded for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service. The Telecom Circles awarded to the company are (i) Assam (ii) Bihar (iii) Himachal Pradesh (iv) Madhya Pradesh (v) North East (vi) Orissa & (vii) West Bengal.

(d) The commercial Cellular Mobile Telephone Services by the company have not yet been started in any of the Circles.

National Power Grid

396. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA :
SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV :

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether a proposal to set up a National power grid in the country to help in meeting power the power shortage in various States is under consideration of the Union Government;

(b) if so, whether the State Governments have been consulted in forming the National Power Grid;

(c) if so, their opinion and the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken;

(d) whether any central legislation is also being considered; and

(e) if so, the time by which the same is likely to be introduced ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Government have formulated plans to interconnect various regional electricity gride of the country in order to form a National Grid. This will help in meeting the power shortage of states deficit in power.

(b) and (c) The power system in the country at present operates under five regional grids and formation of the national grid is based on inter linking of these grids to facilitate transfer of power from one region to another. The concurrence of the State Electricity Boards is taken by POWERGRID before each individual project is taken up for implementation.

(d) and (e) No central legislation is required for connecting the regional grids.

[Translation]

Capacity of Power Projects

397. KUMARI UMABHARATI :
SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA :

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have formulated any programme for increasing the capacity of power projects in view of grave power crisis prevailing in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the likely increase in power generation capacity during the ensuing three years ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) and (b) In accordance with Common Minimum National Action Plan for Power adopted in consultation with State Governments. Government of India has initiated a number of measures for increasing the capacity during the Ninth Plan. These interalia include;

1. Renovation and Modernisation of existing power plants in a time bound manner to bring in improvements in PLF.
2. Accelerated completion of ongoing public sector projects through higher allocation of funds.
3. Taking up of missing inter and intra transmission links to help in improved evacuation of power from surplus region/state to deficit regions.
4. Allocation of liquid fuel for short gestation projects as well as priority to wind power and small hydel projects.

(c) The increase in power generation capacity would depend upon the matching initiatives by the State Governments and close monitoring of the schemes. Targets for increase in capacity during the Ninth Plan are being finalised by the Planning Commission.

Self Employment for Rural Youth

398. SHRI HANSRAJ AHIR : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government provide incentives to the rural youths for setting up of food processing industries based on farmer's yields under self employment programme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government are contemplating to put a ban on setting up of such industries by multinational companies and bit industrial groups in the interest of the rural youths; and

(d) if so, the time by which it is likely to be done?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPU YERRANNAIDU) : (a) and (b) Under Self employment programmes implemented by the Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment, food processing activity is one of the permitted activities but it is not linked with farmer's yield. The rural youth living below the poverty line are imparted skill upgrading technical/vocational training under Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM) and assisted under Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) by way of providing them with income generating assets through a mix of governmental subsidy and bank loans. The Ministry of Food Processing Industries does not have any specific scheme for providing incentive to rural youth for setting up of food processing industries based on farmer's yield under self-employment programme. However, for encouraging establishment and expansion of food processing industry, they have